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Pro and Con

Take the Wraps Off CIA?

YES—"Deal with the world as it is and not as we'd like it to be"



**Interview With
Senator
Walter D. Huddleston**
Democrat,
Of Kentucky

Q Senator Huddleston, why do you favor easing the restrictions on covert operations by the CIA?

A The CIA now has to report on its activities to eight congressional committees—four in the House and four in the Senate. This has a chilling effect on the CIA when it plans covert activities—particularly when the secret operations of other countries also are involved. The intelligence agencies of some countries are afraid to cooperate with the CIA when they know that so many congressional-committee members are going to be told about their plans.

Let me emphasize, however, that we should enter into covert activities with a great deal of caution. They should not be approved except in extraordinary circumstances. And before we begin covert operations, we must be assured that we have fully assessed all the risks and dangers involved.

Q Some people believe that cloak-and-dagger operations designed to topple foreign governments or assassinate political figures abroad have no place in the foreign policy of a democracy—

A I can understand that feeling, but we simply have to deal with the world as it is and not as we'd like it to be. There are times when it's to our advantage—and to the advantage of the countries we're dealing with—to engage in covert operations. I would bar assassinations.

Q What other changes in the laws governing the CIA do you propose?

A The Hughes-Ryan amendment to the 1974 Foreign Aid Authorization Act, which requires the CIA to report to eight congressional committees, should be modified. Reporting to only two committees—the intelligence committees of the House and Senate—would be enough. These committees have established acceptable security standards. They have provisions whereby they can relay secret information to other committees that have a need to know it.

Also, I would want the President personally to review and authorize any covert activities of a large scope. There might be instances in which the President could approve categories of operation, and then the National Security Council could determine the specific projects to undertake.

Q If restrictions on the CIA are eased, is there a danger of recurrence of questionable CIA adventures?

A One thing that would militate against that is this: The intelligence committees would continue to have an opportunity to see virtually all the information the CIA has.

Also, Congress must develop a comprehensive charter for operations of the CIA and all of our intelligence agencies. Such a charter would establish ground rules to assure that

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NO—"No agency of government should be removed from accountability"



**Interview With
Representative
Ted Weiss**
Democrat,
Of New York

Q Representative Weiss, why do you oppose easing congressional restrictions on covert operations of the CIA?

A We now know that our intelligence agencies have gone far beyond their legitimate function of gathering intelligence in recent years. When they do, not only do we end up subverting the governments of other countries, but we run a very serious risk of subverting our own democratic process. That's exactly what happened during the Nixon era. To go back to that kind of situation would be a grave mistake from a national, democratic, constitutional point of view.

Q Critics say that the requirement that six congressional committees, in addition to the intelligence committees of the Senate and House, be notified of the CIA's covert operations makes leaks to the press almost inevitable and covert operations almost impossible to conduct—

A I'm not for leaks. But this is a misplaced concern. Members of Congress, on the basis of their record, cannot be accused of not keeping CIA information confidential. I'm much more concerned that we not start building walls of secrecy between the people and those who govern, and between the CIA and Congress.

When House committees other than the Intelligence Committee consider secret CIA matters, any member of Congress can be present. But the Intelligence Committee can refuse to permit other members of Congress to sit in on its sessions. This makes some members of Congress more equal than others, and is a very dangerous trend.

Q Then you oppose proposals to restrict CIA reporting to the intelligence committees of the Senate and House?

A I do. Or, if the number of committees hearing CIA reports is to be reduced, nonmembers of the House Intelligence Committee should be allowed to attend intelligence-committee sessions.

Q Wouldn't that be a hindrance to the operations of the CIA?

A No. The fact is that not only is the CIA trying to reduce the numbers of committees which have access to CIA information, but it wants to limit entirely the disclosure to Congress of plans for covert CIA operations—no matter how many committees are involved.

Under the pressure or the guise of international tension, the CIA wants to go back to doing business as it did before the Congress and the American public and press called the CIA to account. That would be a very serious and mistaken step backwards.

Q Those who would ease the restrictions on the CIA say that intelligence agencies of foreign countries have declined to co-

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individual rights would be protected in our free and open society.

Q If the agency had had a freer hand, could it really have done anything to push events in Iran and Afghanistan in directions favorable to the U.S.?

A In Iran, we obviously relied upon the Shah and his organization to supply us with information. What actions we might have taken, had we had better intelligence sooner, are pretty problematical. Once the tide began to move against the Shah, there was not much that could be done.

On Afghanistan, our intelligence information was pretty good. But misinterpretation of the information is always possible. I don't know what we could have done there that we were not doing.

Q Are your colleagues who are now informed of CIA covert activities willing to give up that privilege?

A We have talked to some of them, including Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. If committees like Senator Church's can be assured that the intelligence committees will have prior knowledge of CIA covert activities and—in a secure way—will pass along information to other committees that need it, then I think these committees will give up the privilege of being briefed directly by the CIA.

Q Do you know of instances in which information given to Congress by the CIA has been leaked to the press by lawmakers or their staffs?

A You would be hard pressed to find specific instances where secret information has been leaked from Congress. On the Senate Intelligence Committee, we are very careful about how we handle secret information. I think the White House and the intelligence community have confidence in our committee and, hopefully, in the House committee.

Q Does the public have too easy access to CIA information under the Freedom of Information Act?

A Yes. Responding to requests under the FOI Act requires a tremendous amount of man-hours and a lot of expense. There is reason to believe that certain requests are initiated by the Soviets' KGB. We should restrict FOI requests to American citizens who are seeking information on their own personal involvement with the CIA.

Q Haven't there been instances in which the lives of CIA agents were endangered when their names were revealed?

A Yes. I'm very much concerned about the revelation of names of agents. Philip Agee, a former CIA agent, is the principal offender. His activities have caused a great deal of difficulty for the CIA. There should be very strong penalties for those who accept a position in government, pledge to keep information secret, and then violate their pledge when they leave government service. Those who endanger American citizens serving their country in the intelligence community should be severely penalized.

Q By making the disclosure of an agent's name a federal crime, with a jail sentence?

A Yes, a jail sentence and a fine. The question of the role of the press in printing the names of agents disclosed by someone like Agee is admittedly a more difficult area, and we are trying to come to grips with it. □

operate with the CIA because of the extent to which the CIA must report to Congress—

A My tendency is to think that that's an overstatement. A foreign intelligence agency's relationship to the CIA has positive advantages to a foreign country. It is unlikely that a foreign intelligence agency will break it off because the CIA is subject to the democratic processes in this country.

I am basically unsympathetic with the whole concept of so-called covert operations. That is not what we should be doing, except under the rarest of circumstances.

Q The Soviet Union has a massive cloak-and-dagger operation. Wouldn't restrictions on CIA covert operations make it difficult to uncover Russian plans?

A I am for the CIA and FBI having full authority to engage in counterintelligence activities to ferret out information on foreign espionage. But legitimate intelligence gathering differs from cloak-and-dagger operations, which I oppose.

Q Is it possible that if the CIA had had a freer hand, the U.S. position in the Persian Gulf area could have been kept from deteriorating so rapidly and so unexpectedly?

A If anything, the Persian Gulf situation—and I assume you mean Iran and Afghanistan—only demonstrates that it is not more information that is needed but people who are capable of interpreting it accurately. It was no secret that the Russians were massing troops on the Afghanistan border. It was reported. Nobody seemed to pay any attention.

As for Iran, the problem was that we had worked out a sweetheart deal with the Shah that our CIA people were not going to gather intelligence or information except as he approved it.

Q Would you be opposed to aiding those elements in Afghanistan who are resisting the Soviets?

A Not necessarily. If a group that is clearly representative of the majority segments of the Afghan population openly asks for economic assistance or perhaps even military support, I think we should openly consider what is in our best national interest.

My objection is to having the policy determined in secrecy, and then having the American people brought in for the crash landing.

Q Are there no grounds for narrowing the public's access to CIA information under the Freedom of Information Act?

A What the CIA would like is a blanket exemption from the requirements of the FOI Act. That would be wrong. The CIA has been very slow even in supplying information that obviously had nothing to do with national-security considerations. No agency of government should be removed from accountability.

Q What about the accessibility to CIA files by foreigners?

A A good case can be made for restricting foreigners' access to CIA files, but enforcing such a law would be difficult. Americans should clearly have access to their personal files and operational files after some limited time has elapsed.

Q Since lives could be risked by disclosure of the identity of CIA agents, would you object to making such revelations a crime?

A If the names are classified, revealing them should be a crime. But the person who leaks them within the agency should be charged, not the reporter who publishes them—if we are to protect our First Amendment rights. □



CIA Director Stansfield Turner before one of eight congressional committees to which agency reports.